



# United Nations Environment Programme

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PROGRAMME DES NATIONS UNIES POUR L'ENVIRONNEMENT · PROGRAMA DE LAS NACIONES UNIDAS PARA EL MEDIO AMBIENTE  
ПРОГРАММА ОРГАНИЗАЦИИ ОБЪЕДИНЕННЫХ НАЦИЙ ПО ОКРУЖАЮЩЕЙ СРЕДЕ

## NORTH AMERICAN CIVIL SOCIETY CONSULTATION

In preparation for the 10<sup>th</sup> UNEP Global Civil Society Forum (GCSF) and the 25<sup>th</sup> Session of the UNEP Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum

November 13-14, 2008

Hosted by World Resources Institute  
10 G Street, NE (Suite 800)  
Washington, DC

### CO-FACILITATORS' SUMMARY

Co-facilitators:

Dave Foster, Blue Green Alliance and UNEP Major Groups Facilitating Committee  
and Morag Carter, David Suzuki Foundation

Rapporteur:

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The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Regional Office for North America (RONA) held its annual Civil Society Consultation at the World Resources Institute (WRI) on November 13-14, 2008 in Washington, DC. Attended by 44 participants representing 33 organizations (see Annex 1), the consultation was held in preparation for the 10th UNEP Global Civil Society Forum (GCSF) and the 25<sup>th</sup> UNEP Governing Council and Global Ministerial Environment Forum (GMEF) meetings to be held in February 2009 in Nairobi. The consultation was one of six regional meetings held worldwide.

The aim of the meeting was to provide input into the key items on the agenda for the Governing Council, focusing particularly on two substantive issues: *Globalization and the Environment: Global Crises: National Chaos? And International Environmental Governance and UN Reform: IEG: Help or Hindrance?* The meeting also aimed to provide feedback on UNEP's proposed 2010-2011 Programme of Work.

## 1. Regional Statement

Some of the key points raised by participants in the UNEP North American Civil Society Consultation are enumerated below. Specific suggestions on the Programme of Work can be found in the co-facilitators' summary. While consultation participants support the overall statement and its principles, the various groups present do not necessarily endorse every conclusion.

### A WINDOW OF OPPORTUNITY FOR BOLD ACTION

- The alarming degradation of the environment and the global financial crisis warrant decisive and bold action from a range of actors, including UNEP. Civil society and Major Groups have an essential role to play in helping international institutions address these challenges and should be involved in the design, implementation and monitoring of these institutions' responses. The recent election of a new American

president opens a window for constructive U.S. participation in international processes. In that context, the role of North American civil society should be re-examined to fully leverage this political shift. Civil society can also be a relay to foster behavioral change of local communities toward sustainable production and consumption.

- Bold and inclusive action is needed from a variety of actors and perspectives. The group supports the observation that incremental adjustments to our current international institutions have proved insufficient and need to give way to more transformative change. UNEP should use its mandate to bring together a variety of stakeholders in a cross-cutting fashion by more broadly convening ministers, agencies and international organizations that have an interest in the environment, such as ministers of finance, health and defense.

### **IMPROVE UNEP'S ENGAGEMENT WITH CIVIL SOCIETY**

- It is essential for UNEP to actively engage with civil society in the design, implementation and evaluation of its Program of Work. Participants welcomed the improvements made in the past years, under the leadership of Achim Steiner, to bring the voice of the Major Groups and stakeholders to the Governing Council. However, they pointed to lingering limitations and noted that additional reforms are needed to ensure that civil society participation is continuous, meaningful and influential.
- Some participants expressed concerns over the relative weakness of their comments' impact compared to that of the private sector, and felt that joint statements often lead to language that does not reflect the boldness of civil society's positions. In addition, the group strongly supports promoting dialogue among the Major Groups at the national, regional and international levels.
- Some participants also expressed the view that it is essential to ensure that NGOs have equal access to UNEP discussions and are given equal prominence on the agenda, and felt that industry has greater influence than other Major Groups. UNEP should ensure meaningful engagement of civil society by (1) adjusting forums to enable meaningful input of civil society organizations, (2) making travel funds available to marginalized communities, (3) strengthening civil society capacity, and (4) systematically identifying opportunities for civil society engagement in the design, implementation and monitoring of UNEP's work. Finally, UNEP should track, document and share best practices in partnerships with civil society at the local, regional and international level. This point of equity in the consultation process was raised last year by the participants of the North American civil society consultation and appears not to have been addressed sufficiently by the Governing Council.

### **MAINSTREAMING ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS**

- Participants expressed overall support for a multi-stakeholder financial and environmental approach to solving the environmental and financial crises ("green New Deal"). In that context, UNEP should draw upon civil society's ability to shift citizen and business behavior as well as push North American political leaders to act swiftly and decisively.
- Participants support the integration of environmental issues into the regular decision-making processes of governments, international institutions and civil society as opposed to being considered separately.
- UNEP should play a leadership role in pushing for the "green New Deal" on the environmental side, both as an institution and by cultivating individuals to become champions. UNEP RONA in particular should ensure coordination between international financial institutions and the environmental community in North America.

## **GOVERNANCE REFORMS FOR BETTER COORDINATION AND EFFICIENCY**

- UNEP's adoption of six priority areas brings with it advantages for efficiency but also challenges for coordination across divisions and offices and for ensuring that other environmental issues are addressed. Specific suggestions for addressing this challenge are included in the summary of the consultation.
- In the context of the global financial and climate crises, UNEP should play a leadership role in the reform of international environmental institutions, conventions and agreements.
- UNEP should also ensure that in the current window of opportunity for reform of international financial institutions, environmental concerns are mainstreamed across agencies, institutions and discussions.

## **2. Welcome and Introductory Remarks**

Manish Bapna, Managing Director of the World Resources Institute (WRI), welcomed participants and spoke to WRI's support of UNEP's work. Mr. Bapna then noted that dramatic environmental degradation to date shows that environmental sustainability has failed thus far to be included in financial and political decision-making. His main message was that the current financial crisis, along with the economic disarray it causes, provides a unique opportunity to jump start the economy in an environmentally-friendly way. Resurgence of public acceptance of fiscal policy and regulation and a push for reform of global financial institutions should be used to achieve the transformative changes needed to establish global institutions that truly act as stewards of the environment. Consultations, he added, are essential to both advocate for these reforms and ensure that they reflect civil society's input.

Amy Fraenkel, Director and Regional Representative at UNEP's Regional Office for North America, thanked WRI for hosting the event, participants for attending the consultation, and all of the UNEP staff who worked to make the event possible. She expressed optimism for progress on environmental issues, given the unprecedented coverage of environmental issues in political discussions, including the U.S. presidential election and transition. She added that the impact of the financial crisis on this momentum was unclear and that UNEP was at the forefront of efforts to take advantage of the crisis to raise awareness of environmental sustainability. Ms. Frankel explained that UNEP was repositioning itself and its work program so as to address these challenges in partnership with governments and Major Groups.

Co-facilitator Dave Foster welcomed participants and thanked WRI for hosting the event. He added that, as a result of the American presidential election, the country was likely to reengage in international processes and that participants should reflect on what they can do to represent the views of American and Canadian civil society. Mr. Foster then noted that the Blue Green Alliance (which he directs) has been advocating for the idea of a "green recovery" to enable both the return of economic growth and a shift toward a more sustainable economy.

Dave Foster and Morag Carter, co-facilitators, then explained that the consultation would close with the issuance of either a regional statement or a summary of views, depending on the participants' preference and the level of agreement. They added that a full summary of the consultation would be made available to participants for public comment to ensure that it reflected the diversity of views. Lastly, Ms. Carter informed the group of the process by which two representatives for North America would be elected to attend the Global Civil Society Forum and Governing Council in Nairobi in February.

### **3. Presentation and Discussion of the UNEP Global Civil Society Forum (GCSF) cycle and the 25<sup>th</sup> UNEP Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum (GC/GMEF)**

#### ***Background information on the Global Civil Society Forum and the CG/GMEF***

Hilary French of UNEP's Major Groups and Stakeholders Branch provided background on the process to help participants understand the relevance of the consultation and how it would feed into the Global Civil Society Forum and the UNEP Governing Council. Ms. French reiterated UNEP's commitment to work closely with civil society and representatives of Major Groups as "natural allies." She then spoke about the Governing Council, UNEP's decision-making body, and explained its relationship with the Global Ministerial Environment Forum, to which all environmental ministers are invited to review important and emerging policy issues in the field of the environment.

After presenting how the decision-making process at the governance Level works, Ms. French gave examples of interactions between UNEP and civil society at the program level through the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) process, the Global Environmental Outlook (GEO) report, the Marrakech process on sustainable production and consumption, and capacity building work with workers and trade unions. A presentation of the annual Global Civil Society cycle followed, as well as examples of recent reforms within UNEP to improve collaboration with civil society. The recent creation of the UNEP Major Groups Facilitating Committee and the direct access of the Major Groups to the Governing Council were cited as examples. French concluded with some suggestions for possible ways to further deepen the relationship between civil society and UNEP.

#### ***UNEP's six priority areas and the Governing Council's agenda***

Amy Fraenkel of UNEP RONA opened this session by stating her intent to establish a constructive dialogue with the participants and welcomed comments and suggestions on UNEP's Program of Work (POW). She proceeded to outline the six priority areas which UNEP will focus on in the future. This process was requested by governments for efficiency and strategic reasons, she said. Ms. Fraenkel explained UNEP's rationale for the realignment and offered a presentation of UNEP's comparative advantage in the following six areas: climate change, disasters and conflicts, ecosystem management, environmental governance, harmful substances and hazardous wastes, and resource efficiency/sustainable production and consumption. Each of the six areas will have a lead office, which will be in charge of coordinating with other UNEP offices. Ms. Fraenkel then presented the way in which the regional offices fit into UNEP's structure. UNEP intends to work with regional offices to set priorities and help deliver the work program in the region. She identified the implications for UNEP RONA as being twofold: (1) the office would not conduct capacity building but would put the emphasis instead on outreach on the issues in the regional (2) the office would work with partners (governments, NGOs, businesses, science institutions) in the region to advance UNEP's global POW and address pressing environmental challenges.

Amy Fraenkel then outlined the ministerial themes for the GC/GMEF, including the Green Economy and the interlinked issues of food, energy, and environmental crises. She also noted that the ministerial deliberations will include discussion of the recurring question of global environmental governance reform and ways to ensure that international institutions work effectively together to address environmental challenges. Ms. Fraenkel concluded with a preview of the upcoming Governing Council deliberations on the issue of mercury.

## ***Discussion***

*Civil Society Engagement.* A conversation ensued on the importance for NGOs, business and industry and other Major Groups to be able to express their views individually or jointly. Some participants felt that joint statements at times hinder the reflection of a plurality of views and force diverging groups to compromise on common positions. Hilary French and Amy Fraenkel of UNEP's Regional Office for North America (RONA) reaffirmed UNEP's commitment to meaningful civil society engagement and explained that the newly-created Major Groups Facilitating Committee had as one of its roles facilitating policy statements from Major Groups either individually or jointly. Several participants welcomed this change, and noted that a diversity of views had generally been reflected in earlier civil society statements emerging from UNEP consultations..

*Realignment in six priority areas.* Another series of comments related to the realignment into six priority areas. Responding to concerns from participants that some issues might no longer be represented and addressed, Ms. Fraenkel explained that the alignment was a high level one and that details about what the themes include could be found in the POW. Addressing another question about coordination with particular sectors, UNEP's Director for North America added that while the work was not broken down by sector, UNEP did engage with particular groups or sectors on issue specific initiatives (e.g., the U.S. and Canadian federal governments on sustainable procurement). Another participant inquired about the coordination with UNEP's divisions (science, policy, monitoring and assessment etc.), to which Ms. Fraenkel replied that the divisions remain in place and that it will be the responsibility of the lead office for each issue to coordinate with other divisions.

*UNEP's mission.* One participant argued that UNEP should defend Earth's intrinsic value as opposed to always viewing it through the prism of services to humans. To this, UNEP staff reminded the participants that the organization's slogan is "environment for development". Several remarks emphasized the need for UNEP to make clear connections to tangible results, explain the relevance of the organization's work to the average person on the street as well as revisit its branding policy to be more visible worldwide.

Participants also talked about the idea of holding a summit for the environment for the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Rio Summit.

## **4. Introduction to UNEP's Program of Work**

Lucien Royer of the International Trade Union Confederation and Chair of the UNEP Major Groups Facilitating Committee presented to the audience the main points of the Stakeholder Forum's initial findings on potential partnerships with Major Groups and Stakeholders to implement UNEP's Program of Work. The 6-page report with the specific recommendations is available at: [http://www.unep.org/civil\\_society/GCSF10/pdfs/Initial-Findings-RCM-POW.pdf](http://www.unep.org/civil_society/GCSF10/pdfs/Initial-Findings-RCM-POW.pdf). Mr. Royer noted that the Major Groups have been encouraging UNEP to focus on concrete targets and get civil society to participate in the development of those targets and in the implementation of the activities. He also pointed to the historical importance of the existence of a mechanism at the international level to gather civil society's input. Mr. Royer encouraged participants to focus on the outputs delineated in the Program of Work and to think of the way in which the Major Groups might help UNEP achieve these. The Major Groups are not featured prominently overall either in the description of the strategy, the partnerships or the outcomes, Royer noted. Subsequently, he presented the project objectives of the stakeholder forum, the areas in which the stakeholder groups have been involved thus far and those in which strategic partnerships would be useful (including work on indigenous peoples and communication of UNEP's work). Lucien Royer also gave examples of successful partnerships and put forward Stakeholder Forum's suggested guidelines and criteria for established partnerships. He emphasized that UNEP needs to systematically document and share lessons learned from past partnerships, and ensure that UNEP-wide knowledge management systems guarantee coherence across the organization. Participants concurred with this observation. The details of each of those sections can be found in the Stakeholder Forum's draft document on proposed UNEP partnerships with Major Groups and Stakeholders.

## ***Discussion***

The partnership in Spain between national businesses and trade unions to make joint recommendations to the Spanish cabinet for program implementation was given by Mr. Royer as an example of a successful partnership from which to learn. A participant noted that the term “partnership” can be interpreted as an alternative to the command and control approach. Several participants concurred with an observation that partnerships are at times based on the false premise that everyone at the table is equal. Industry was said to be more powerful than NGOs thanks to its superior financial capacity to attend meetings around the world and to follow up on opportunities. Mr. Royer concurred with the recommendation that the risk of imbalance among partners be kept in mind as partnerships are designed. Another participant wished to see more detail in the POW on the road to the ultimate goals with more focus on implementation, funding, and the way in which the Major Groups can help achieve UNEP’s goals. Monitoring and evaluation, it was added, are essential to give everyone the confidence that resources (UNEP’s and its partners’) are used effectively.

## **5. Presentation of the Themes of the 25<sup>th</sup> GC/GMEF and Discussion**

### ***Olivier Deleuze and John Scanlon present***

The second day of the consultation opened with a videoconference with John Scanlon, Principal Advisor to the Executive Director on Policy and Programme at UNEP and Olivier Deleuze, Chief of UNEP’s Major Groups and Stakeholders Branch. Mr. Scanlon opened his remarks with thanks to the participants for their attendance and with a statement of commitment to work with civil society partners in advance of, during, and after the forum. Mr. Scanlon proceeded to outline the plan for the Global Ministerial Meeting and the Governing Council. The first agenda item relates to issues that have emerged over the last twelve months that the ministers want to discuss. This session, entitled *Global Crises, National Chaos*, will tackle the global food crisis, energy security, water security and access to fresh water in the context of both the climate and financial crises. Exchanges will focus on ways for countries to manage these multiple crises. To illustrate the fact that international processes can be very difficult for countries to interact with, Scanlon noted that there are currently twelve different financial mechanisms to help countries respond to climate mitigation and adaptation.

The second item, entitled *International Environmental Governance: Help or Hindrance*, will address the need for reform of international institutions to better respond to environmental challenges and help countries tackle them. Mr. Scanlon indicated that the first day of the ministerial session would be dedicated to providing the latest information available on the main debates to ensure that all ministers have equal understanding of the issues. The second day will focus on the green economy and country-level responses to the financial and environmental crises. Governance aspects of these questions will be addressed during the third day.

Olivier Deleuze concurred with the consultation participants’ stance that civil society should be more engaged in the implementation and evaluation of UNEP’s Program of Work. He added that current political and financial shocks should be used as levers to achieve reform of international institutions.

## ***Discussion***

*Green economy.* A set of comments were made related to the concept of a green recovery or tackling climate change through a bold response to the financial crisis. John Scanlon indicated that ministers have been very receptive to the idea. UNEP is particularly interested in pursuing an agenda of green job creation which would seek to generate employment by addressing global warming. A suggestion was made to use best practices of investment in clean energy and regulations to shape major financial investments in coming years. Germany’s feed-in tariff program, which resulted in rapid growth in the alternative energy industry at little incremental cost for consumers, was mentioned as a successful example. The question of raising funds to address climate change prompted participants to warn against entrusting such funds with institutions, such as the World Bank, with a

weak track record of investing in clean energy and integrating environmental concerns into their investment decisions. Participants also noted that climate change was the product of our economy and that despite improvements in efficiency and awareness, the trends remained on the decline. Several participants welcomed the idea of holding a summit to reform the Bretton Woods institutions with a view to rethinking the concept of wealth creation and progress by factoring in environmental considerations. One participant suggested that UNEP use the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment and other assessments to inform such profound economic reform. The 20-year anniversary of the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro was mentioned as a possible opportunity for forward action by several people in the room.

*Civil society participation.* Questions and comments were raised with regard to guaranteeing adequate and meaningful participation of civil society in the planning and implementation of UNEP's Program of Work. Mr. Scanlon indicated that while member governments have varying views on the subject, UNEP as an organization strongly supports civil society involvement and has taken steps to increase civil society participation in and access to the Governing Council, by, for example, facilitating access to ministers and giving civil society representatives the possibility to speak in the plenary. Participants also expressed some confusion about UNEP's definition of civil society. The organization has not been systematic in determining whether civil society does or does not include the private sector. Mr. Deleuze recognized the role that the private sector plays in providing finance to address today's pressing environmental problems and hence stated the importance of continuing to engage private sector actors.

A conversation followed on the role that civil society could play in helping UNEP achieve its mission. It was noted that civil society can speak to national political leaders and help ensure that the message of green economic recovery is carried to decision-makers from the bottom up. By putting this issue at the forefront of ministers' minds, civil society has the potential to "prime" ministers for a shift in global governance, as one participant put it. As participants suggested that UNEP convene heads of state to tackle this challenge, Mr. Scanlon explained that the Secretary-General of the United Nations is mainly responsible for engaging leaders at the head of state level, whereas programs convene at the ministerial level. He added that the Secretary General has convened heads of state on this subject and that UNEP is coordinating with him on the theme of the green economy.

*Governance reforms and coordination.* In response to UNEP's intent to set in motion transformative change of the environmental governance regime, several participants expressed scepticism about the likelihood of success of such an endeavour. It was argued that shifts in power within bureaucracies have been historically very difficult and that agencies' determination to cling to their mandates, power and resources would undoubtedly cripple reform efforts. This reality needs to be taken into account and built into a strategy of reform in order to achieve profound changes, the participants contended.

In an effort to better coordinate with other agencies and actors whose actions have an impact on the environment, it was suggested that UNEP think more broadly of its mandate and constituents to include ministries that have an interest in the environment. The health, military and financial sectors were given as examples. Mr. Scanlon replied that UNEP did participate in World Health Organization meetings and that such participation is important. He added, however, that UNEP made a distinction between ministries for the environment and ministries with an interest in the environment. Governments, he noted, ultimately decide who attends UNEP meetings.

A related theme was the recurring call from participants to mainstream (or integrate) climate change in ministries and other decision-making bodies at the national and international levels. In that context, some participants stated that UNEP or another organization with the needed expertise should play the role of a knowledgeable coordinator across agencies and ministries.

The group issued a strong call to UNEP to act as a leader in the realignment of international institutions. It is important for UNEP to take advantage of the window of opportunity opened by the economic crisis to achieve profound governance reforms of financial and environmental institutions. Participants strongly supported the

idea of UNEP's Regional Office for North America (RONA) coordinating a forum on the green economy with the North American-based international financial institutions. Several participants expressed surprise in learning that UNEP did not have a vision for international environmental governance reform and encouraged the Nairobi headquarters to articulate such a vision.

Messrs Scanlon and Deleuze concluded by acknowledging the big window of opportunity for bold action opened by the financial crisis and reiterated their intent to establish a link between efforts to address financial and environmental challenges. Participants echoed this observation and called upon UNEP to move boldly and decisively by focusing on the issue without being paralyzed by process and bureaucratic constraints.

## **6. Break-out Groups and Report on UNEP's Program of Work for 2010-2011**

Participants then reported on the discussions of the previous day's break-out sessions. These were aimed at commenting on UNEP's Program of Work in three groups: Climate Change and Disasters and Conflicts (facilitated by Morag Carter of the David Suzuki Foundation and Dave Foster of the Blue-Green Alliance), Harmful Substances and Hazardous Wastes and Resource Efficiency/Sustainable Consumption and Production (facilitated by Lucien Royer of the UNEP Major Groups Facilitating Committee) and Ecosystem Management and Environmental Governance (facilitated by Karin Krchnak of The Nature Conservancy and Maria Ivanova of the College of William and Mary). Highlights from those break-out groups follow.

### **6.1 Climate Change and Disasters and Conflicts**

#### **Facilitators: Morag Carter, David Suzuki Foundation and Dave Foster, Blue-Green Alliance**

*Climate Change.* The group noted that the Stakeholder Forum's outline on "UNEP Partnerships with Major Groups and Stakeholders to implement the Programme of Work 2010-11", while rich, was difficult to understand and should be simplified. Participants noted that UNEP should help make the link between the creation of green jobs and new green industries and the opportunity for developing countries to provide living wages for people in the process (what the International Labor Organization refers to as "decent work"). Regarding capital investment for renewable energy projects, it was noted that developing countries should not be penalized when applying for funding from the World Bank. The group identified an opportunity for partnering with the private sector, in particular on the production of power from some waste streams. With regard to UNEP's role, break-out group participants recommended that UNEP play a leading role in convening international institutions and coordinating with other relevant processes to address climate change but cautioned against popular antipathy vis-a-vis global government. As an advisor, UNEP could help identify the risks and benefits of the various approaches. It was also noted that UNEP needs to demonstrate tangible results that resonate with the public at large and needs to make itself more approachable and meaningful to local communities through better use of its mission statement, slogan and logo for example. In fact, certain groups feel disenfranchised and not engaged enough; youth and faith groups were given as examples of communities that are empowering themselves and fostering change and environmental stewardship. More generally, public engagement was felt to be underappreciated by UNEP as a lever for change. Al Gore's collaboration with faith groups to train educators who would raise awareness of the climate change in their communities was given as a successful example. Similarly, the Blue-Green alliance has fostered outreach with steel workers and unions on climate change and the potential for a green economy to generate new jobs. Environmental citizenship programs and celebrations and pageants that excite and invite community participation could be put in place as awareness raising activities. A disconnect was also noted between programmes and policies and UNEP should minimize this gap. The group also recommended that UNEP prioritize the green jobs agenda in both developed and developing countries. Developing countries don't always have the technical and institutional capacity to make the types of choices necessary to set them on a path of green growth and UNEP should help build the necessary capacity.

*Disasters and Conflicts.* Participants aimed to assess the level of preparedness of countries to provide food and resources to their population when disasters hit and to be able to prevent harm to the population in the face of environmental disasters and conflicts. It was noted that strategies to address this should be a central part of climate change strategies. The risk of environmental hazard resulting from a natural disaster or a conflict warrants a quick response from public authorities. In the absence of such rapid action, negative impacts could be longstanding, the group added. The need for countries to adapt to environmental disasters and to conflicts requires the establishment of appropriate infrastructure. Participants pointed out that whether in the form of new buildings and sectors or through retrofitting of existing structures, or creation of new green industries. One clear observation was the lack of institutional capacity and clear plans of action in response to disasters in many countries (including the U.S. as evidenced by the response to Hurricane Katrina). This often results in poor responses when disasters strike and UNEP could help countries establish specific frameworks and plans to be ready to act in the case of an environmental emergency. It was also recommended that, in the context of responses to disasters and conflicts, UNEP fully leverage civil society as a partner in responding to these crises. UNEP has a top-down mandate to ensure appropriate national-level responses to conflicts and disasters but local governments and civil society are essential partners for local-level action. The relationship thus far has been unclear and not fully tapped. A related point about coordination was raised: UNEP should ensure that it operates in concert with other UN agencies on these matters. Transparency and accountability of UNEP's partnerships in this regard was also deemed essential.

## **6.2 Harmful Substances and Hazardous Wastes and Resource Efficiency/Sustainable Consumption and Production**

### **Facilitator: Lucien Royer, UNEP Major Groups Facilitating Committee**

*Harmful Substances and Hazardous Wastes.* A point about coordination was made: UNEP, the UN Commission on Sustainable Development (UNCSD), and other U.N.-linked efforts such as the Marrakech process on sustainable consumption and production should interact with greater coherence with Major Groups. Some participants felt that UNEP documents revealed a predominance of business and government input over that of civil society and other Major Groups. Civil society participants often face resource constraints and are consequently unable to participate in, and fully take advantage of, discussions. More generally, forums need to be restructured to more systematically allow for civil society input in a meaningful way. Participants added that commitment to international instruments should be strengthened through partnerships and integrated approaches, in particular on transboundary issues. The group advocated for an integrated approach to toxics, starting with metals. In this effort, the group added, it is important to ensure vertical integration among community-based approaches, national, regional and international networks and processes. The group also called for the development of a database of good case studies of civil society involvement. One participant gave the example of Wisearth as a database that could list names of organizations available to build partnerships. Opportunities for community engagement in UNEP's Programme of Work (particularly in the section on outputs) should be identified more clearly. Regarding government oversight, participants argued in favor of stronger regulation provided that it is transparent, cost-effectiveness and science-based. The group also pronounced itself in favor of a legally binding treaty on mercury. Another series of remarks pertained to food and beverages. In the context of the financial crisis, the group argued, UNEP should focus on food safety and ensure that public regulators prevent market speculation of basic resources and ensure accountability of financial institutions. Furthermore, given that governments are likely to reduce their financial commitments to international organizations such as the GEF, it is important that such institutions be strategic about their actions and redefine their priorities. Lastly, the participants of this group called for identification of best practice in agriculture with regard to methane emissions and a review of asbestos and cadmium in integrated assessment in the same way that mercury has been reviewed.

*Sustainable Consumption and Production.* The group emphasized the importance of promoting green purchasing, as well as of raising consumer awareness and of improving sustainability on the production side. Negative externalities should be integrated in the production process upstream through legislation and

regulation, participants stated. UNEP was said to have a role to play in rallying trade workers and unions in the push for more sustainable production. Additionally, it is important to promote consumer awareness of life cycle issues in particular as they connect to labor rights and the food crisis, through labels for example. It was also recommended that, in the same way that leaded gasoline is being phased out, other lead-based products such as paint be phased out as well.

### **6.3 Ecosystem Management and Environmental Governance**

#### **Facilitators: Karin Krchnak, The Nature Conservancy and Maria Ivanova, College of William and Mary**

*Environmental governance.* The group issued a favourable judgement over UNEP's mandate to address pressing environmental issues by developing standards and policies, by coordinating and by strengthening capacity on the ground. It was however felt that this mandate might be revised to be more operational. Participants felt that UNEP should be more visible through (a) greater presence in New York and Geneva where the headquarters of other major institutions are located: (b) greater recognition of UNEP contributions within the UN system and beyond, (c) greater presence in regional offices. Participants considered that one of UNEP's main roles was to act as an information and knowledge clearing house. In addition, the group called for robust integration of gender issues and criteria in UNEP's POW. With regard to civil society engagement, it was noted that civil society complements UNEP's skills and comparative advantage and that it should systematically assess partnership opportunities with civil society groups. UNEP should also put an emphasis on strengthening the capacity of civil society organizations in developing countries to help achieve its mission. Among the services that civil society can bring to UNEP are: advocacy of UNEP's ideas in front of local and national governments, knowledge transfer of complex scientific information to relevant entities, on-the-ground support and marketing power, and connections to vulnerable communities such as children, youth, women and indigenous groups. Universities were given as an example of institutions that can help galvanize youth to address environmental challenges. The governance group also noted that, in the context of potential reform of international financial and environmental institutions, UNEP should play a leadership role in ensuring that environmental concerns are at the center of the discussions. It could do this both as organization and by nurturing individual champions.

*Ecosystem Management.* Participants signalled that UNEP should ensure that ecosystem services and their preservation are integrated in other processes. They noted that the ecosystem services approach was not always followed and gave the example of water, where sanitation and water supply programs did not look at the issue through an ecosystem services lens. Civil society was identified as a major partner in encouraging environment-related ministries and actors to conduct ecosystem assessments. While UNEP is not authorized to lobby, its mandate of environmental advocacy should constitute the basis for coordination with civil society actors that can advocate on their behalf at the country level. UNEP can also help governments change their accounting procedures to take account of ecosystem services. In particular, UNEP should ensure that government ministries and other policy stakeholders understand the relevance and apply the concept of ecosystem management (to the financial sector in particular). The example of Costa Rica was one that was suggested that UNEP build upon. The group also regretted the general nature of the POW's language in its subsection on ecosystem management. It called upon UNEP to re-write the section to (1) be more explicit about the meaning of the phrase "ecosystem assessment" and (2) state clearly who would be in charge of conducting such assessments. For coordination with other international organizations, participants recommended that UNEP work more closely with the Davos World Economic Forum and bring an environmental perspective to countries' PRSPs (Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers). UNEP should also ensure that sound ecosystem management be built in the strategies of other UN agencies. Lastly, echoing a concern raised in other groups, participants called upon UNEP to better track best practices (in the field of ecosystem management in this case).

## **7. Selection of Sponsored Regional Representatives to the Global Civil Society Forum (GCSF) and the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum (GC/GMEF)**

In the consultation's final session, two civil society representatives were elected to join current regional members of the UNEP Major Groups Facilitating Committee as regional representatives of North America at the GCSF and GC/GMEF of February 2009 in Nairobi. Co-facilitator Morag Carter explained the process of participation in the GC as well as the election process. She indicated that the selection of representatives should take into account technical expertise and reflect the diversity of views and groups as well as gender balance. After the co-facilitators gave an opportunity to all participants to introduce themselves, nominations were made. After the nominees each delivered short remarks to the group, the elections were held and the following participants elected:

### Designated representatives:

- 1) Maria Ivanova, College of William and Mary
- 2) Kathryn White, United Nations Association in Canada

### Alternates:

- 1) Stuart Hickox, One Change
- 2) David Randle, WHALE Center
- 3) Richard Jordan, World Harmony Foundation

## **8. Discussion of meeting outcomes and closing session**

The co-facilitators presented to the participants a draft regional statement based on the rapporteur's summary of comments made over the course of the consultation. The group agreed to review the document and aim to issue a formal statement for North America rather than an executive summary. The statement was discussed, adjusted and approved.

Lucien Royer, Chair of the Major Groups Facilitating Committee, stated his appreciation for having been able to participate in the regional meeting and vowed to use the group's suggestions to improve the consultation process within the Major Groups. Maria Ivanova and Kate White, newly elected representatives for North America at the GSCF and GC/GMEF, encouraged participants to contact them with suggestions or documents to bring to the Governing Council at [kate.white@unac.org](mailto:kate.white@unac.org) and [mivanova@wm.edu](mailto:mivanova@wm.edu). John Griffith of the State Department, an observer to the consultation, appreciated the opportunity to join the meeting and said that, as a member government representative, he viewed his role as ensuring that UNEP becomes more effective and is held accountable for its use of financial resources. Hilary French thanked the participants for their time, WRI for hosting the event and the chairs for their time and effort. Reiterating thanks to the participants, the co-facilitators informed the group that their summary would be circulated for comments. Evaluations were circulated and the meeting was closed.

# **Annex 1 - Consultation Participants List**

**North American Civil Society Consultation  
November 13-14, 2008**

## **World Resources Institute**

**Mishkat Al Moumin**, George Mason University

**Katy Ayres**, Center for International Environmental Law (CIEL)

**Alfred Bailey**, New Psalmist Baptist Church and Sankofa Community Development

**Katherine Ball**, College of William and Mary

**Manish Bapna**, World Resources Institute

**Jeffrey Barber**, Integrative Strategies Forum

**Melissa Blue Sky**, Mercury Policy Project

**Jack Bradin**, Quaker Earthcare Witness

**Morag Carter**, David Suzuki Foundation

**Ambika Chawla**, Worldwatch Institute

**Amanda Chiu**, Worldwatch Institute

**Julia Clones**, Women Organizing for Change in Agriculture and Natural Resource Management (WOCAN)

**John Coe**, Green Cross Canada

**Angela Crandall**, Environmental Law Institute

**Cathey Falvo**, International Society of Doctors for the Environment (ISDE)

**Kanika Feaster**, New Psalmist Baptist Church and Sankofa Community Development

**Ira Feldman**, Greentrack

**Dianne Forte**, Heifer International

**David Foster**, Blue Green Alliance

**Olivia Gast**, The World Conservation Union (IUCN)

**Renee Gift**, Center for International Environmental Law (CIEL)

**Mary Gilbert**, Quaker Earthcare Witness

**Stuart Hickox**, One Change

**William Hough**, Phillip and Sala Burton Center for Human Rights

**Maria Ivanova**, College of William and Mary

**Richard Jordan**, World Harmony Foundation

**Norine Kennedy**, US Council for International Business (by teleconference)

**Karin Krchnak**, The Nature Conservancy

**Jacquin Milhouse**, University of Maryland Law School

**Dennis Miller**, Solena Group

**Remi Moncel**, World Resources Institute

**Charlotte Moser**, The World Conservation Union (IUCN)

**David Randle**, WHALE Center

**K. W. James Rochow**, Trust for Lead Poisoning Prevention

**Lucien Royer**, International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC)

**Greg Skelton**, International Council of Chemical Associations (ICCA) / American Chemistry Council

**Bernard Smith**, New Psalmist Baptist Church and Sankofa Community Development

**Clare Stankwitz**, College of William and Mary

**Dmitri Tasmali**, Tunza Youth Advisory Council

**Kees van Duijvendijk**, The World Conservation Union (IUCN)

**Weston Watts Jr.**, Vermont Law School International Law Society, The Sub-Committee on Military Related Environmental Concerns

**Caitlin Werrell**, Earth Day Network

**Kathryn White**, United Nations Association Canada

**Lauren Wood**, Center for International Environmental Law (CIEL)

UNEP:

**Clayton Adams**, UNEP

**Tess Cieux**, UNEP RONA

**Amy Fraenkel**, UNEP RONA

**Hilary French**, UNEP RONA / Worldwatch Institute

**Catherine Hallmich**, UNEP RONA

**Kelly Rain**, UNEP RONA

**Carsten Zoglmeier**, UNEP RONA

Observers:

**Allison Anderson**, Center for International Environmental Law (CIEL)

**John Griffith**, Department of State